

"On The Town"

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My Fan

As she started walking toward me at the mall and very obviously looking straight at me, It was hard for me not to notice that for a woman probably in her sixties, she was very, very attractive. I knew as pretty as she is now, as a younger woman she was stone cold gorgeous. Vainly I stood up straight, threw my shoulders back - pulled my stomach in and said to myself "You still got it baby!

As she walked toward me, I kept looking at her knowing that my gawking at her was noticed by my lovely wife walking with me, and she was not happy watching me leer at another woman. As the woman approaches me she says: "Hi - when I was a student at Rollins College, and for the last forty-five years, I have been a big fan of yours. I have listened to your music - seen you in concert and remember seeing you on TV many times. I've seen you in Orlando night clubs - I spoke to you after seeing you at the Contemporary Hotel at Disney - You were there with Mickey Rooney, and I still have the photo you gave me.

Two things happened to me after that salutation. I was most grateful and appreciative for her compliment to me. I like to hear when I have made people happy with my work. But something else also happened. I felt really old.

Truly as I look back at my career spanning over sixty years, it looks feels like ancient history - but time has gone by so fast. I remember going to a Performing Arts High School in Hollywood, recording and performing in Southern California – being on the road for five years in California, and in the early seventies when they first opened the park, performing with **Nick Russo of Gabriel's Brass** at Disneyworld in Orlando. I can remember performing at the Villa Nova and Monte's Pub - two great supper clubs in Maitland - I remember the TV commercials and radio jingles I had on the air in the sixties and seventies. God, I say sixties and seventies now, and that was a long time ago. No it wasn't..... It was yesterday!

I remember after I got out of the navy, com-

ing to Florida from California to get an undergraduate degree in music at Florida State University - one of the top Music Schools in the Country. I remember earning three graduate degrees in Florida and California. I can tell you the names of my Professors and the classes I took. I remember during the early sixties, working in clubs around the country singing the **Florida State University** fight song with people asking me **what** an "FSU" was. I remember the names of every song I sang in my shows, but today can hardly remember lyrics of those songs. I can remember the face of every musician I ever performed with but can't remember their names.

I remember every piano lesson, theory class, orchestration, arranging and speech class I took as a kid. I remember as a teenager being a male model for **Roy Rogers's western wear** in Sears Roebuck catalogues. I remember as a kid, going to jam sessions in LA and Hollywood and sitting in with musicians who became superstars in the sixties and seventies.

I remember making \$10.00 (a lot of money at that time) while in high school working as a rehearsal pianist for the Lawrence Welk TV Show on ABC TV. In the sixties, I remember coming home after being on the road for two months, reaching for my year and a half old daughter who started crying because she didn't know who I was. Everything I just wrote are the thoughts that went through my mind in a matter of seconds when my fan, in the mall, came up to me and said hello.

I have had a wonderful career in music as a performer, producer, arranger, composer and educator. I know I have a few good years left to make good music and bring a smile to someone's face, when they hear my music or see my productions. I don't like it, but I don't have a problem with aging - but I still enjoy a fan coming up to me and saying nice things. Don't we all?

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